



How can we make a Difference?

We can all play a part in keeping our river and lakes sanitary and sparkling. The purity of our water depends on the actions of us all at home.

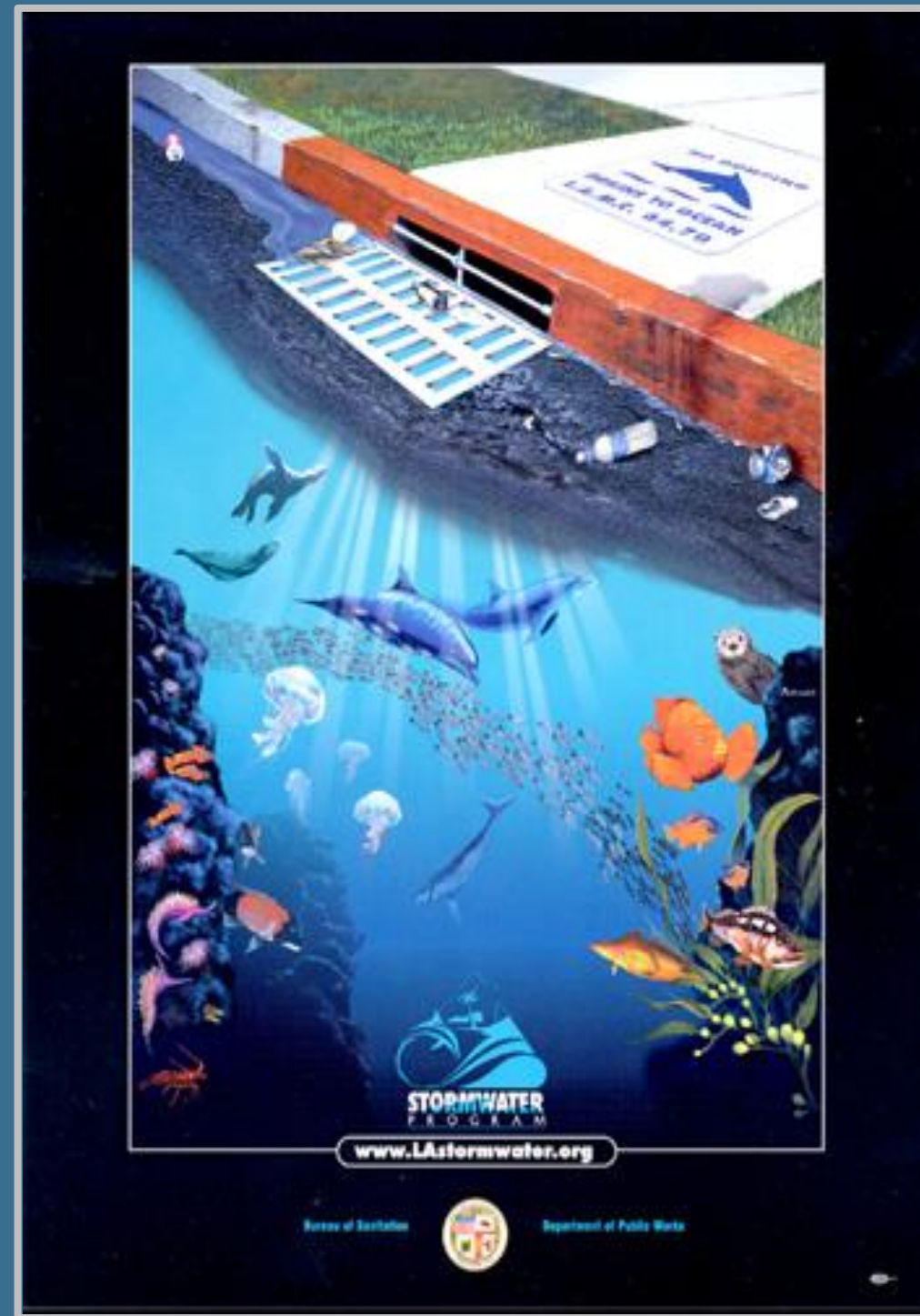


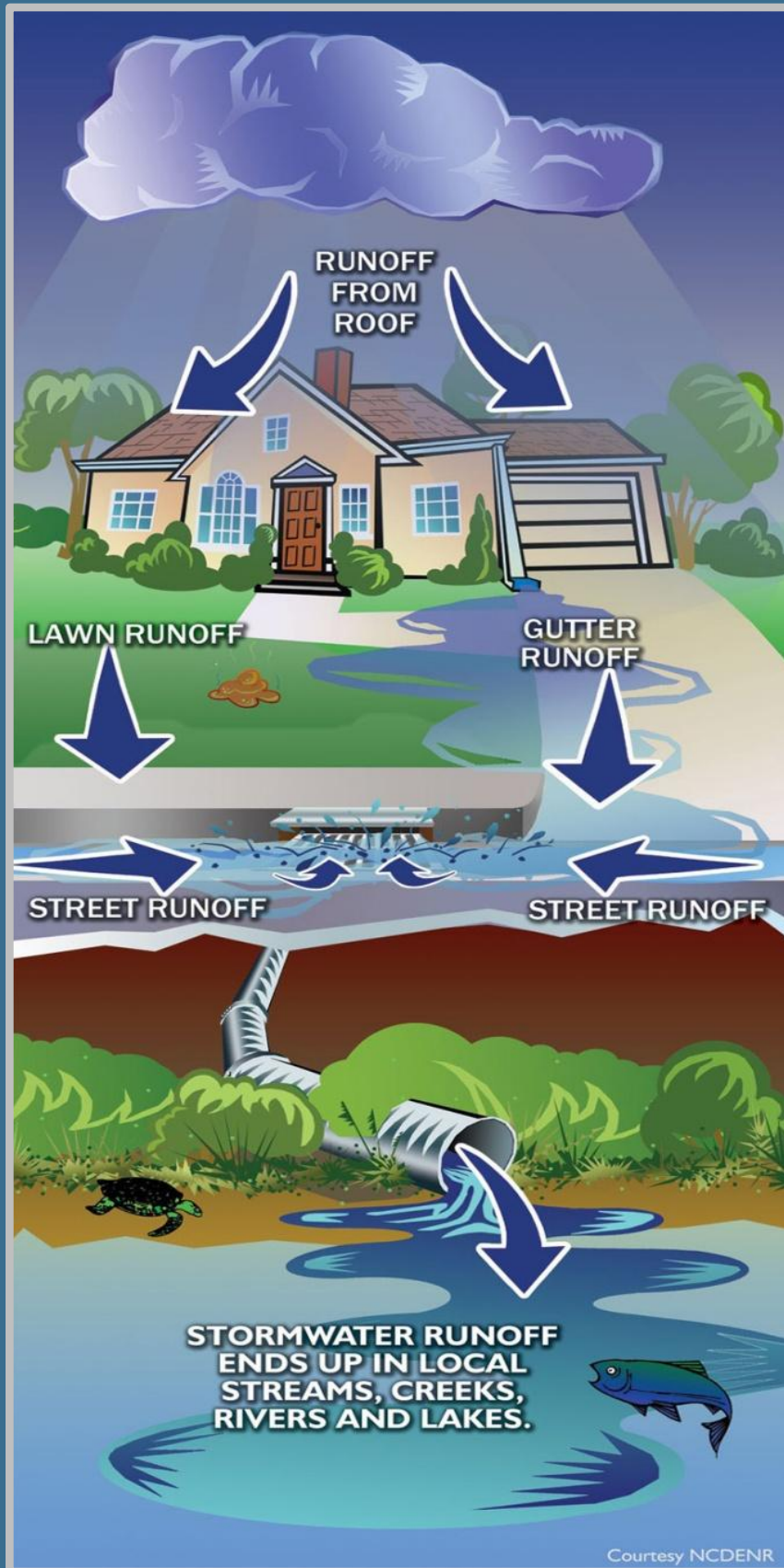
Image courtesy of: <http://cfpub.epa.gov/npstbx/searchMaterials.cfm?GroupID=62>

BENEFITS OF MINIMIZING WATER **POLLUTION**



- **Cleaner, safer drinking water**
- **Less Money spent on water purification treatment**
- **More recreational use of our lakes and river**
- **Healthier wildlife population**
- **Less problems with flooding**
- **A healthier and cleaner environment for our families**

Keeping Our Rivers Clean



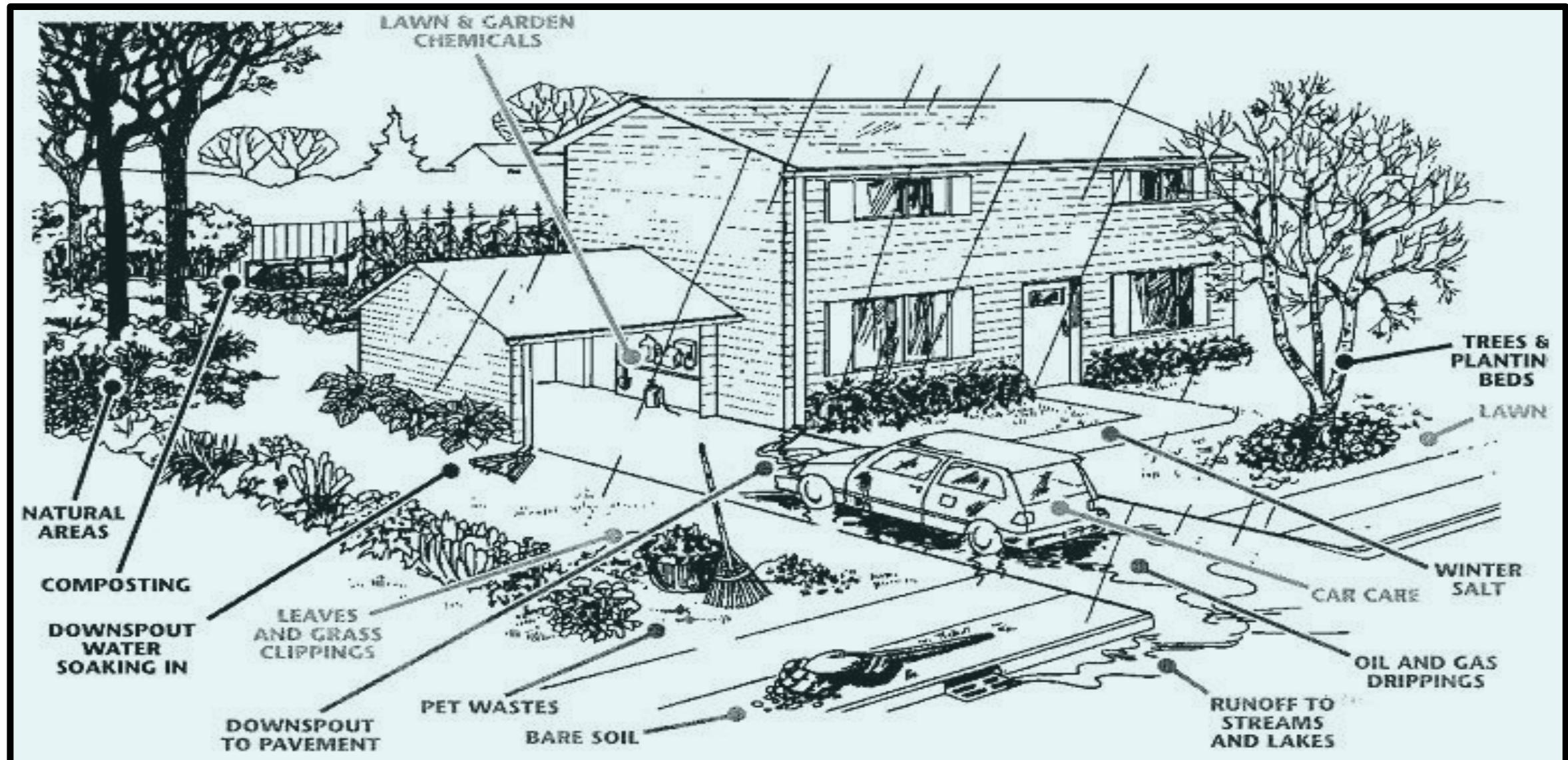
Did you know that storm sewers carry rainfall directly into our rivers and streams? This includes anything that is picked up by the rain, such as litter, grass clippings, pet waste, and lawn chemicals. Our rivers and streams are a valuable asset to us, they provide us with a place to swim, boat, and fish. That is why it is important for us to protect our rivers and do our part to keep them clean. Here are a few helpful tips that will keep our rivers clean and beautiful.

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Home hot spots for water quality

Around every yard are spots where your activities affect water quality. The illustration shows a few of them. Take a look around your own home with an eye toward water quality.

- Good for water quality ● Bad for water quality ● Could be good or bad, depending on your actions



RETHINKING YARD CARE



- Sweep grass clippings back onto the lawn—they make an excellent natural fertilizer
- Aim downspouts onto the grass rather than the pavement
- Wash your car on the lawn rather than the driveway or street
- Protect slopes with thick ground cover or rock gardens to prevent erosion
- Keep a barrel to catch rain, and use it for watering your garden
- Have your soil tested to know how much, and what specific fertilizer is needed.
Don't use more than you need!
- Use a fertilizer low in phosphorus content. Phosphorus is a nutrient for algae and weeds, and overgrowth of these disturbs the ecosystem
- Sweep all fertilizers back into your lawn

Yard and Pet Waste



Grass clippings and leaves from our yards can enter the storm inlets and drainage ditches, which go straight to the streams and river. This waste contains bacteria and chemicals from herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers that contaminate our water and harm our aquatic ecosystem. **Pet waste** is also harmful if it gets into storm inlets. It causes decay and increases algae content in the water. Pet waste releases ammonia and contains parasites that are hazardous to your health and can kill fish.

The City of Rockford picks up yard waste along with garbage collection!

REMEMBER:

- Flush it
- Bury it
- Put it in the trash

MAKE SPACE, NOT WASTE

The general rule “**Make Space, Not Waste**” unifies the concepts governing yard waste reduction.

- Make space using odd corners in yards for an area where leaves and yard trimmings can decompose out of view
- Recycle nutrients by leaving clippings on the lawn
- If you must collect them re-use the clippings as mulch or compost
- When shredded with the lawn mower, leaves are a great resource for organic nutrients, reducing the frequency of raking
- Put downed branches to good use-they make great plant stakes and vine supports

Rain Barrels

If you're harvesting rainwater with rain barrels to use for watering your landscaping, the rainwater can help to improve the health of your gardens, lawns, and trees. Rain is a naturally soft water and devoid of minerals, chlorine, fluoride, and other chemicals. For this reason, plants respond very well to rainwater.



Besides helping the environment, an obvious reason for harvesting rainwater is to save money. Depending on the size of your house and the amount of rainfall in your area, you can collect a substantial amount of rainwater with a simple system. This extra water can have a significant impact on your water bill. The use of rainwater combined with the domestic use of grey water can further increase your savings.



A Rain Garden will allow the runoff generated on your property to infiltrate into the ground and help to reduce potential water quality problems. While your individual rain garden may seem like a small contribution, collectively, rain gardens can produce water quality benefits.



What is a Rain Garden?

A **rain garden** is a natural or dug shallow depression designed to capture and soak up storm water runoff from your roof or other areas around your home like driveways, walkways, and even compacted lawn areas. When sized and constructed properly, rain gardens are able to handle the amount of storm water produced in an average event. **One inch of rain, covering an average 30' X 50' roof surface = 1,500 square feet or 935 gallons of water!**

- The rain garden is planted with suitable trees, shrubs, flowers, and other plants allowing runoff to soak into the ground and protect water quality.
- Rain gardens can also help protect water quality by reducing **storm water runoff** from your house lot.

Storm water runoff can result in:

- Overall reduction in groundwater recharge.
- Long-term lowering of groundwater tables and loss of stream flow during dry weather.
- Increased erosion.
- Increased water quality impacts caused by pollutants in storm water runoff.
- Flooding – especially more frequent “flash” flooding.

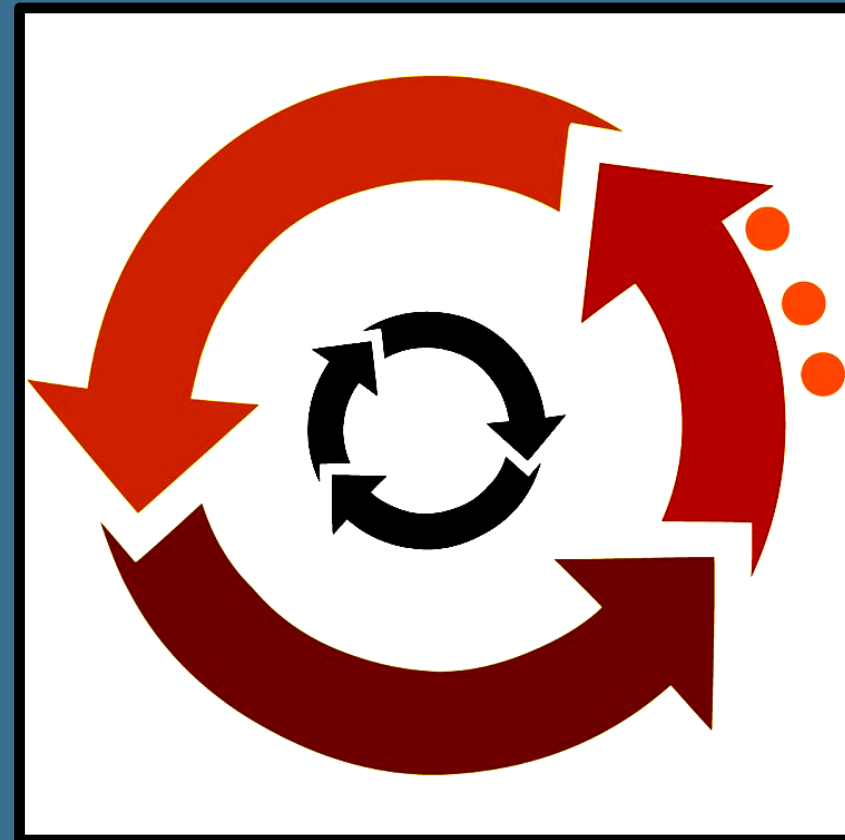
The Problem At Home

- Trash and waste, such as plastics, can enter our water and add toxins to the environment.

YOU CAN HELP BY:

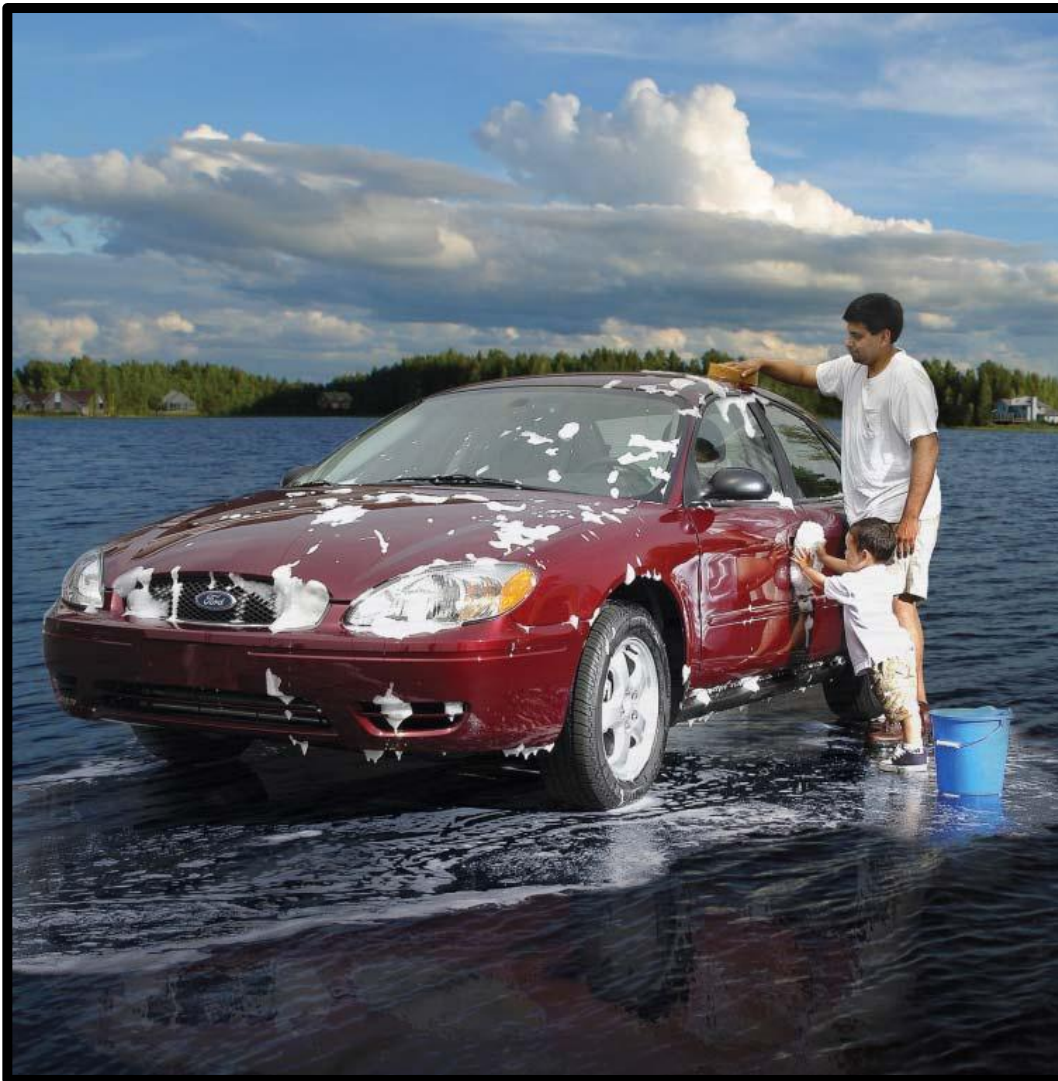
- Recycling and buying recyclable products
 - Use refillable containers
 - Use compost bins
- Dispose of household chemicals safely
- Find out about the local hazardous waste disposal and collection. Call the City of Rockford Public Works Dept. at

815-987-5570



Remember, you're not just washing your car

Practice good car care



Did you know . . . 4 quarts of oil can form an 8 acre oil slick if dumped or spilled down a storm drain?

That's because storm drains found in our streets and yards lead directly to our lakes and streams. So, oil and dirty water from washing our car that goes into storm drains pollutes our water.

What can you do? Simple.

- Take your car to the carwash where the dirty water is treated before it gets to our water.
- Wash your car on your lawn or direct the dirty water towards the lawn and away from the storm drain.
- Keep your car properly tuned.
- Recycle used fluids and never dump them down the storm drain.

Help keep the oil where it belongs . . . in your car.

GARBAGE AND RUBBISH

- Garbage and rubbish are general health hazards that can attract flies, rats, and other creatures that in turn can lead to the spread of disease
- They contain materials that can seep into our groundwater, streams and rivers
- They are not pleasant to look at and take away from the beauty of our city

THERE ARE OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO PROPERTY OWNERS:

1. Place your garbage/bulk items out for weekly collection
2. Place items into garage for storage
3. Up to 4 used tires, engine oil, and household hazardous chemicals can be dropped off at the household hazardous waste site at 3333 Kishwaukee St.
4. Hire a private contractor to haul off large amounts of garbage



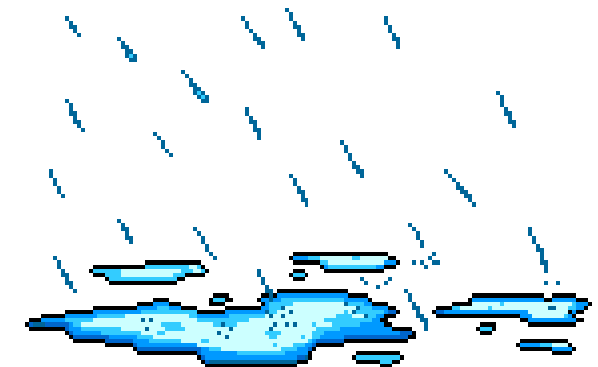


WHAT YOU CAN DO **IN THE COMMUNITY**

- Don't litter
- Pick up litter in the community and throw it in the trash
- If you see a construction site that is allowing soil to be carried away, call the City Of Rockford Public Works Dept. at

815-987-5570

- Let others know about the harmful effects of water pollution



THANK YOU FOR DOING YOUR PART

REMEMBER,

WE ALL PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE
IN KEEPING OUR WATERSHEDS
CLEAN AND BEAUTIFUL!